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**REMARKS
BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
AMERICA WEEK 2012
CYCLONE SHELTER GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY
JANUARY 30, 2012 AT 12:45 PM
COAST GUARD STATION SANGU**

Honorable Minister of Home Affairs Sahara Khatun

Director General Bangladesh Coast Guard Vice Admiral Hossain

Good afternoon!

In a few minutes, the Honorable Home Minister and I will turn a spade of earth.

It is a small thing, simply a kilogram or two.

But it is a huge thing, as that small pile of earth represents the first step of a journey that will lead to a huge cyclone shelter right here, on this very spot.

That shelter will be huge not only in size ... but also in its ability to save lives during natural disasters.

When next a cyclone hits this area, more than 1500 people will find safety in this shelter ... people and their livestock will be able to survive the storm and rebuild their lives.

I am pleased that America has already built or rebuilt about 550 cyclone shelters And we are building another 116 cyclone shelters.

Together, these shelters will save thousands and thousands of lives.

When not needed to save lives, these shelters will help form lives, as the shelter will serve as a local school.

I am proud that America is partnering with Bangladesh in this huge countrywide campaign to build shelters where the good citizens of Bangladesh can seek refuge when next disaster strikes.

The success of this campaign to build shelters across the nation is evident in the dramatically reduced casualty figures for recent disasters when compared to those of twenty years ago.

The people and government of Bangladesh must rightly be proud of this progress.

Of course, there are many more shelters to build, and America will continue to stand beside Bangladesh to keep building those shelters.

So, in a few moments, when you witness a spade turning that first clod of earth, I hope you will be able to envision, as I do, the cyclone shelter that will soon stand here and the thousands of Bangladeshi men, women and children, who will one day find safety and security within its walls.

Today is truly a moment of history.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery*

GR/ 2011